



City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

Parks & Recreation Board

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Jan Ross, Chair
Eric Miller, Vice Chair
Ken Shepherd, Secretary
Holly Haines
Chrissy Kaminski
Harvey McCleskey
Donna Simmons

Harmoni Grable, Clerk

Wednesday, October 15, 2025

7:00 PM

Gahanna City Hall, Council Chambers

A. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Ross Called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The agenda was published on October 10, 2025.

B. ROLL CALL

Staff in Attendance: Stephania Ferrell, Director; Brian Gill, Superintendent; Chris Simmons, Supervisor Aquatics; Noelle Dennison, Coordinator I; Nichole Butler Clerk; Harmoni Grable, Clerk

Present: 6 - Chrissy Kaminski, Eric Miller, Donna Simmons, Jan Ross, Ken Shepherd and Holly Haines

Absent: 1 - Harvey McCleskey

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ross noted that the pricing policy does not state that the 25% fee waiver is only on the weekends and requested a roll call on the meeting minutes with the change.

[2025-0196](#)

PR Board Minutes 09.17.2025

A motion was made by Simmons second by Miller, that the September 17, 2025 minutes be approved as published. The motion carried the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Kaminski, Miller, Simmons, Ross, Shepherd and Haines

Absent: 1 - McCleskey

D. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA

E. HEARING OF VISITORS

Robert Thorne of 210 Creighton Ct, Gahanna, OH

Mr. Thorne spoke on mowing along Big Walnut Trail in Academy Park Forrest

Mr. Thorne voiced concerns of how wide the verge of the riparian area of Academy Park is being mowed compared to other parks locations. Mr. Thorne also expressed concerns with the amount of silt that washes into the Academy Park creek after heavy rain and if that was a city concern or outside of Gahanna. Mr. Thorne also expressed concern with the flood basin on Ebright Road regarding whose responsibility it belonged to.

G. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS**F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS****H. NEW BUSINESS**

Ross Thank you, Nichole Butler, for all your services, and thank you to Harmoni Grable for joining us.

2025 Aquatics End of Season

C. Simmons reflected over the successful summer in the aquatics department reflecting a record number of membership sales utilizing a new member promotion of a 10% discount for those who have not been a member since 2019, which led to a 15% increase in membership sales from 2024. Simmons continued the breakdown that showed the primary purchase were of residents of Gahanna at 66% and nonresidents being 33% of sales. Residents indicated in a survey taken that 90% anticipated renewing their membership for the 2026 season. Aquatics saw a 16% increase from 2024 in day pass sales for day passes at the Gahanna Swimming Pool, with a total of 25,610 entries. Hunters Ridge Pool showed a 5.5% increase since 2024, for a total of 16,720 entries. With swim lessons being held only at Hunters Ridge Pool reflects the higher number for just swim lesson entries. There are eight different daily entry passes, one for each pool prior to 4 pm and one for each pool after 4 pm all reflecting both a resident and non-resident rate. We continue to see the highest purchases being residents of Gahanna.

In 2025 there were 254 applications for seasonal positions. Simmons wanted to highlight the 84 lifeguard applications being higher than previous years especially during a national lifeguard shortage. This year being the first-year aquatics has felt truly staffed from the beginning of the season, including a 53% retention rate of staff returning from the 2024 season. Of the 254 applications, 145 were hired. Gill explained that the 254 applications did include applicants applying for multiple positions. Simmons stated that aquatics has identified positive engagement, effective communication, and improved training leads to a positive culture to increase retention of staff. Utilizing an employee survey, they received 90 out of 145 responses showing 90% would return to work. Aquatics has seen an increase of staff from 93 in 2023 to 145 in 2025. The 2025-year aquatics certified more staff in higher level certifications than in previous years. Pool managers are now required to hold a lifeguard instructor certification which allowed managers to build stronger relationships as leaders and role models. The certifications enhanced total operations by having enough instructors to certify 145 employees, prepared employees for more day-to-day experiences, and knowledge for handling situations. Aquatics now requires concessions to hold a Serve Safe certification. This year Noelle is now certified as a lifeguarding instructor trainer through American Red Cross. 10 pool managers were certified as lifeguarding instructors, 87 certifications in lifeguarding, 72 certified in higher level CPR and ADD for professional rescuer. The 72 are both aquatics as well as some camp staff for the CPR requirement to be met. 70 water safety instructors for swim lessons, staff training for swim coaches and coaching staff, and a babysitting basics class for 7 younger kids.

Aquatics saw a 13% increase in swim lesson enrollments totaling 653 individuals in group lessons. Two new programs were added including a diving team a Jr. Lifeguard after successful referrals from the babysitting basics classes. We saw a 16% increase in our adaptive swim lessons from 2024 in only our second year being held. Simmons stated that they are receiving great feedback from these programs.

C. Simmons stated that there have been some improvements at both pools including a diving block at the Gahanna Swimming Pool, new tables and umbrellas to meet the need of more shade, high visibility clocks for employee operations, new deck storage for equipment and two fun umbrellas from Parks and Rec Foundation. This year we saw our revenue grow to 70% from swim team rentals by bringing in three new swim teams from Westerville. We hit our capacity on weekday camp

visits. Shelter rentals increased by 52% in 2024.

Currently to date aquatics is recognizing a 53% cost recovery which is identical to 2024, exceeding the expectations for the last two years.

Thanks to the Parks and Rec Foundation, 42 families received financial assistance this summer showing a 13% increase in pool memberships from 2024 as well as helping 2 families with swim lessons.

Miller stated the staffing success was impressive and asked if there were any pool repair expectations for 2026. Ferrell stated that there are no major repairs anticipated at this time but are always up against the aging circumstances of the pools. Parks and Recreations has a capital maintenance line to help manage any shortfalls. Miller asked how many of the 15% increase of new members were nonresidents. C. Simmons stated that he assumes it would fall within the 33% breakdown of new memberships. D. Simmons asked which cities the nonresidents were from. C. Simmons said the information was not known, but assumed it was from Gahanna Jefferson School District that are not in Gahanna City. D. Simmons asked if any identified concerns that could be improved moving forward? C. Simmons stated that the entry process has come up multiple times and is actively being looked at. D. Simmons asked if any families had to be turned away from requesting scholarships. Butler stated that there were no applications rejected. Kaminski asked if there was a sliding scale for scholarship awards. Gill stated that scholarships mirror the school's free or reduced lunch program income-based scale. With the scholarship offering a 75% for free lunch, and 50% for those who are eligible for the reduced lunch program.

Gill congratulated the Parks and Recreations team on a record-breaking year, including staffing, aquatics, and camps. The impact of not being short staffed left operations running smoother and a better impact on staff workload. The savings of inhouse lifeguard and water safety trainings has helped cost. The training has also proved a safer pool environment for staff and participants. The constantly improving ideas both C. Simmons and Dennison have innovated into the department, including the adaptive swimming program, have left a strong impact in meeting the needs of the community. The hiring process is already underway in preparation for the 2026 summer season. Kaminski asked if there were any behavioral issues for the 2025 season. C. Simmons did not believe there was a single call to EMS or Police. Kaminski expressed that the splash pad went smoothly this year as well. C. Simmons stated that they saw a lot of usage during the 8 am to 12 pm hours, including both residents and non-residents. Kaminski stated C. Simmons was doing a great job

empowering the staff. Miller asked if any other suburbs come to get certified as instructors. C. Simmons said they have worked with the city of Hilliard to run some classes together. Dennison stated that they were also able to help Grove City and Plain City when enrollment was too low for their classes.

Ferrell noted that what C. Simmons outlined followed some of the action items that are intended for progressive improvement in the Parks Master Plan. Ferrell pointed out that the team's dedication to meeting the individuals where they need it most, shows the impact Parks and Recreation has on the community. Ferrell noted that the team does a great job following the data to understand and make changes to improve cost recovery and revenue expenditures. Miller asked if instructors must be recertified every year or every three years, as well as if CEU's are expected. C. Simmons responded that they run the in-house recertification for each employee annually to cover the skills needed but not processing that certification unless they are due. Gill stated that this is so each employee can demonstrate skills needed for the job. Kaminski recognized the work the team does in their dedication for adaptability facility and programs to meet the need of the community.

[2025-0214](#)

2025 Aquatics End of Season

PR Pricing Policy

Ross stated per Gahanna Health Ordinance the Parks and Recreation Board Council annually evaluates the Pricing Policy. Ross stated that the waivers are a highlighted focus after everything is discussed.

Ferrell noted the red lined changes in formatting, page number 5 under the non-resident fee policy reflects an inclusion of what the expectation is regarding proving residency. It is not different than previously seen but intended to reflect the expansion of modules in the recreation software for a more user-friendly experience during registration, and the need for formalizing the language of proof of residency. Ross asked if on the memberships of rentals for non-residents why the language shows the different percentage ranges. Ferrell said it is correlated that way based upon circumstances that are hard to predict for a true percentage. Ross asked how the household credits worked if someone cancelled. Ferrell said that the software allows for the preferred method of credit is added as a household credit that can be utilized for a different program or activity. Ross asked if they expire. Ferrell stated that there is a timeline,

but it is not policed closely.

Ross stated that there were six approved fee waivers for 2024, only one not approved based upon policy, related to Gahanna Schools. In 2025 there were seven related to Gahanna Schools. Ross asked if there were any ideas on how we process our decision making for these waivers?

Miller stated that he believes they should have a policy but still be on a case-by-case basis. Ross asked if there should be any limits on requesting the waiver or should we change to partial or full waivers?

Kaminiski asked if there are any waiver getting blocked from going to the Board. Ferrell states that there is no circumstances that block the review of the Board. Discounts that are available to the community through partnerships do not go to the Board, only personal use requests for personal benefits require approval. Kaminski asked how often the school is requesting the waiver. Ferrell stated that the shelters are first come, first serve unless there are reservations made, but exclusive use requires a reservation. Ross expressed that the policy was put in place to have some guardrails. Ross agreed that it is case-by-case basis, but that it could balloon to too many requests. Ross stated that they needed to feel good about being consistent in how we're applying the decision making.

If we have the 25% discount for nonprofit and churches during weekday, why is that lower than the schools discount? Kaminski stated that she thought it was due to having an established relationships with the school. She wants to ensure that they are giving back, partnering and ensuring the framework is looked at each time depending on the partnerships.

Ferrell stated that the schools mirror the population being served with the recreation programs through Parks and Recs. If a school is hosting a function and utilizing a public park that feels like an appropriate request. If it is more of an independent vs a community benefit that can sway the decision on if a full waiver is accepted or not. Ross asked how often if at all, we are losing out on another rental request due to the waiver. Ferrell said it is not a hinderance for others to use. Ross asked how far in advance it can be requested. Ferrell answered one year in advance, however with the schools schedule it is usually a much smaller timeline requested. Both D. Simmons and Kaminski agreed that they are ok with keeping the policy as is. Miller asked if other communities gave a senior discount. Ferrell said that she does not know if other communities have a rental discount for seniors. C. Simmons said that a discount is not offered on daily aquatics admissions but are on aquatic memberships.

[2025-0198](#)

2026 PR Pricing Policy Redline

A motion was made by Kaminski second by Shephard, to approve the 2026 pricing policy as presented. The motion carried the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Kaminski, Miller, Simmons, Ross, Shepherd and Haines

Absent: 1 - McCleskey

I. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ferrell highlighted the contracted tree work that has moved forward. This fall there will be over 300 street trees planted throughout the city. The October events including one this evening at the park at Ashburnham Campfire in the Park, and the long awaited annual Great Goblin's Fest on October 24th. Kaminski asked what type of street trees were getting planted. Ferrell stated that there is a diversity of trees that the team feels strongly about to reduce any type of circumstances that may affect an entire species. Ferrell stated that the majority of the trees being planted or replanted are part of large removals, the ash that came down, or part of the sidewalk program. Ross asked if there were certain trees that shouldn't be planted by the sidewalk. Ferrell said that there is a comprehensive landscape plan for both prohibited and preferred tree species in relation to the width of the tree line available and shown in a document accessible to the public. Kaminski asked what the process was in alerting a resident about a tree being removed or replaced. Ferrell stated that they alert the resident on all fronts, giving notice if a hazard is identified. If there is not a requirement for it to be replaced, there is a list the resident can still opt in to replace the tree as well as communication of care and timeline of planting that is presented to the resident. Kaminski asked if once planted, does the care remain solely with the resident or does the city check in on it. Ferrell answered that the care is of the residents, but that there are dedicated arborists who do pay attention.

Ross asked how construction is going at the Price House. Ferrell stated that construction is moving along with no surprises so far with the goal of ribbon cutting in summer of 2026.

[2025-0197](#)

PR- September 2025 Directors Report

J. COMMITTEE REPORTS

i. Bicycle & Trail Advisory Committee (BTAC)

Miller shared a map of section 8 crossing over Hamilton Road that was discussed at the previous BTAC meeting.

[2025-0222](#)

BTAC Exhibit-Design-100

ii. Gahanna Active Senior Advisory Committee (GASAC)

Kaminski asked about the success of the Senior Expo event. Ferrell answered that there was great support from the vendors and the senior membership.

iii. Natural Resources Advisory Committee (NRAC)

K. POLL MEMBERS FOR COMMENT

Miller stated that the traveling Vietnam Veterans Memorial was very representative of the original in Washington D.C. and that there was an estimated attendance of about 3,500 for the event.

L. ADJOURNMENT